

A photograph of a family walking through a field of tall grass at sunset. A woman in a floral dress and hat holds the hand of a young boy in overalls. A man in a denim jacket carries a baby in his arms. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the setting sun, with a string of lights visible in the background.

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FOUNDATION
for a **Healthy North Dakota**

OUR VALUES

We know that healthy communities, families and individuals are vital to the success of our state now and in the future. We believe members of our communities want the best health outcomes for themselves, each other and all North Dakotans. By promoting informed health decisions, trusting one another and our own communities, we can realize a healthier North Dakota.

WHAT WE DO

The Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota was founded in 2022 under a directive to build a statewide coalition of people and organizations committed to creating better health outcomes for all North Dakotans. We believe the future of our state depends on re-establishing trust in our communities around community wellness, and we are committed to providing North Dakotans with reliable, trustworthy health information and advocating for legislative policies that are rooted in public health best practices. Through this growing coalition, we strategize on how best to communicate with local community members and empower them to promote wellness within their own circles.





SANDRA TIBKE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Partners,

Reflecting on 2024, I'm proud of what the Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota accomplished in our third year of operation. Through strengthened collaborations and community-focused initiatives, we've made significant strides toward making North Dakota the healthiest state in the nation.

This year marked a remarkable growth in our educational outreach, with our monthly webinar series reaching more than 1,200 participants—double our 2023 attendance. We launched our Vaccine Advocacy Learning Community, produced compelling video stories highlighting diverse perspectives on wellness, and hosted our inaugural Children & Families Wellness Fair, bringing together local organizations to provide free health resources and activities.

Our policy work made meaningful progress through the Innovation, Equity, and Exploration workgroup, which developed recommendations for incorporating doula services into maternal care to improve outcomes for mothers and babies across rural North Dakota. We also published our Community Health Workers Guide and quarterly data analysis to inform community-level decision-making.

Perhaps most exciting was the launch of the Multi-Partner Health Collaborative with the American Heart Association and North Dakota Health & Human Services. This unprecedented initiative brings together leaders from health, education, business, and economic development sectors to collectively work toward making our state healthier. None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff, board members, and partners who share our belief that health begins at the grassroots level. As our coalition has grown from 524 to 940 members this year, we're reminded that everyone has something to contribute to building community wellness.

Looking ahead to 2025, we remain committed to expanding our table, welcoming diverse voices, and forging new connections. Together, we can build bridges that lead to a healthier state for all North Dakotans.

With gratitude and hope,

Sandra Tibke
Executive Director
Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota

OUR TEAM



SANDRA TIBKE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sandy has spent nearly 20 years serving the people of North Dakota. Before joining FHND, she led the city of Mandan through an oil spill, flood recovery, and downtown revitalization as its city commissioner, and as executive director of Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota she helped grow the organization's revenue and visibility and advance legislation.



SHELLY DAVIS

COALITION HEALTH DIRECTOR

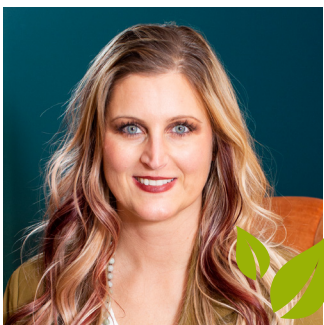
Shelly brings more than 10 years of public health and health administrative experience to FHND and also serves as a research coordinator for the National Resource Center on Native American Aging. She was recently named to Native Governance Center's newest Indigenous-led cohort of community leaders..



PAM GULLESON

MULTI-PARTNER HEALTH COLLABORATIVE COORDINATOR

Pam serves on the North Dakota State Board of Agriculture Research. Prior to that, she was the vice president of public affairs for Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota for more than a decade and served 16 years in the North Dakota House of Representatives. She has also served on many advisory committees throughout North Dakota.



MARY LIZAKOWSKI

COALITION HEALTH DIRECTOR

Mary possesses extensive experience in the field of vaccine development and academic and clinical research, spanning over a decade. Her focus at FHND is on stakeholder coordination, statewide coalition development, and leading training and education opportunities. She also serves as the secretary and policy and advocacy co-chair for the North Dakota Public Health Association.



ELIZABETH PIHLAJA

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth has spent more than a decade in the public health field. She previously worked as a senior dissemination specialist for national nonprofit Zero to Three and was the maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting (MIECHV) program administrator for the state of North Dakota.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



TRAVIS ALBERS

Travis is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota. He is currently in his fourth year as the cultural liaison and Title VI coordinator for the Mandan Public School District and second year as the Mandan Middle School Activities Director.



DR. KATHY ANDERSON

Dr. Anderson is a general pediatrician and integrative medicine physician. She previously served as chair of pediatrics at Mid Dakota Clinic (now Essentia) and St. Alexius Medical Center (now CHI) and also as president of the North Dakota American Academy of Pediatrics. She is founder and CEO of Nurturing Wellness Pediatrics.



CHRISTOPHER JONES

Chris is a senior fellow and vice president for health care policy at the Cicero Institute. He previously served as the commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services under Governor Doug Burgum for the state of North Dakota.



BRITTANY MAHER

Brittany is a registered nurse and a clinical manager at the Sanford Children's clinic in Fargo, North Dakota. She's a graduate of Sanford's Vax Champ program and manages Sanford Health's wellness pantry, which serves children and families experiencing hunger who visit the clinic.



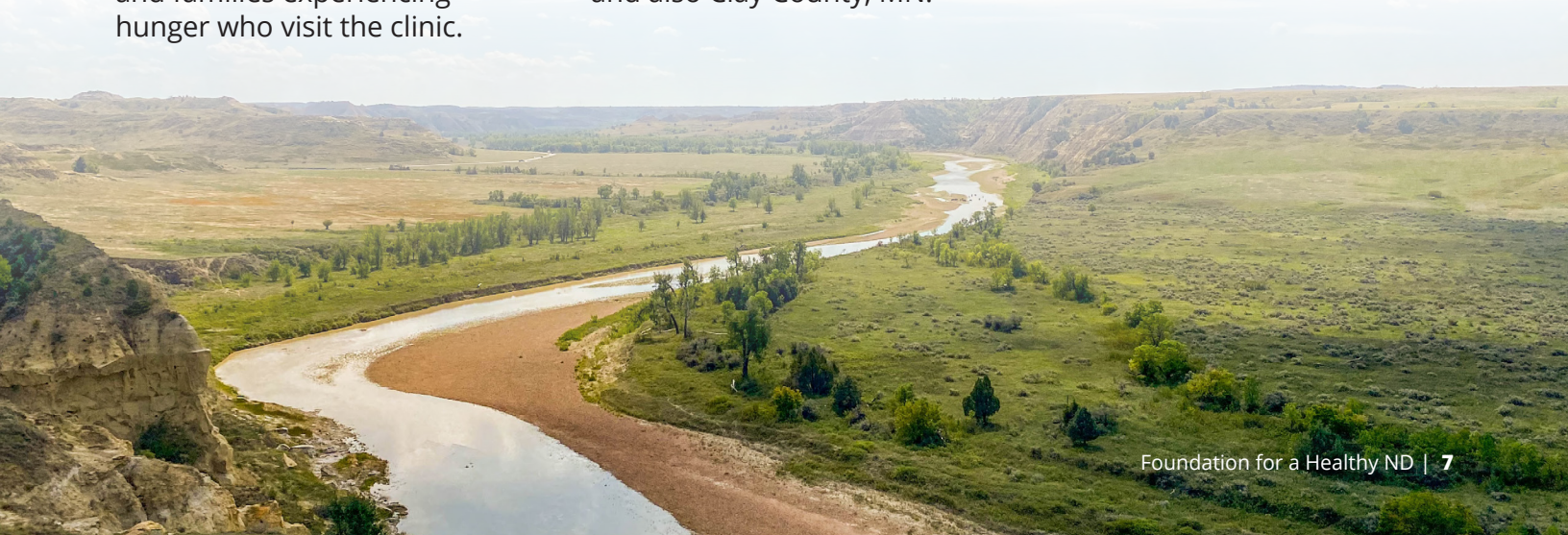
NICOLE OUTKA

Nicole works at Great Plains Food Bank as regional services manager, where she focuses on reducing barriers as well as education and strategy surrounding food insecurity across both the state of North Dakota and also Clay County, MN.



LINDA REINICKE

Linda worked in the early childhood field for 35 years, as a preschool teacher and owner, childcare center director, Child Care Aware Director, and home visitor for Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect.



EDUCATION & OUTREACH



WEBINARS

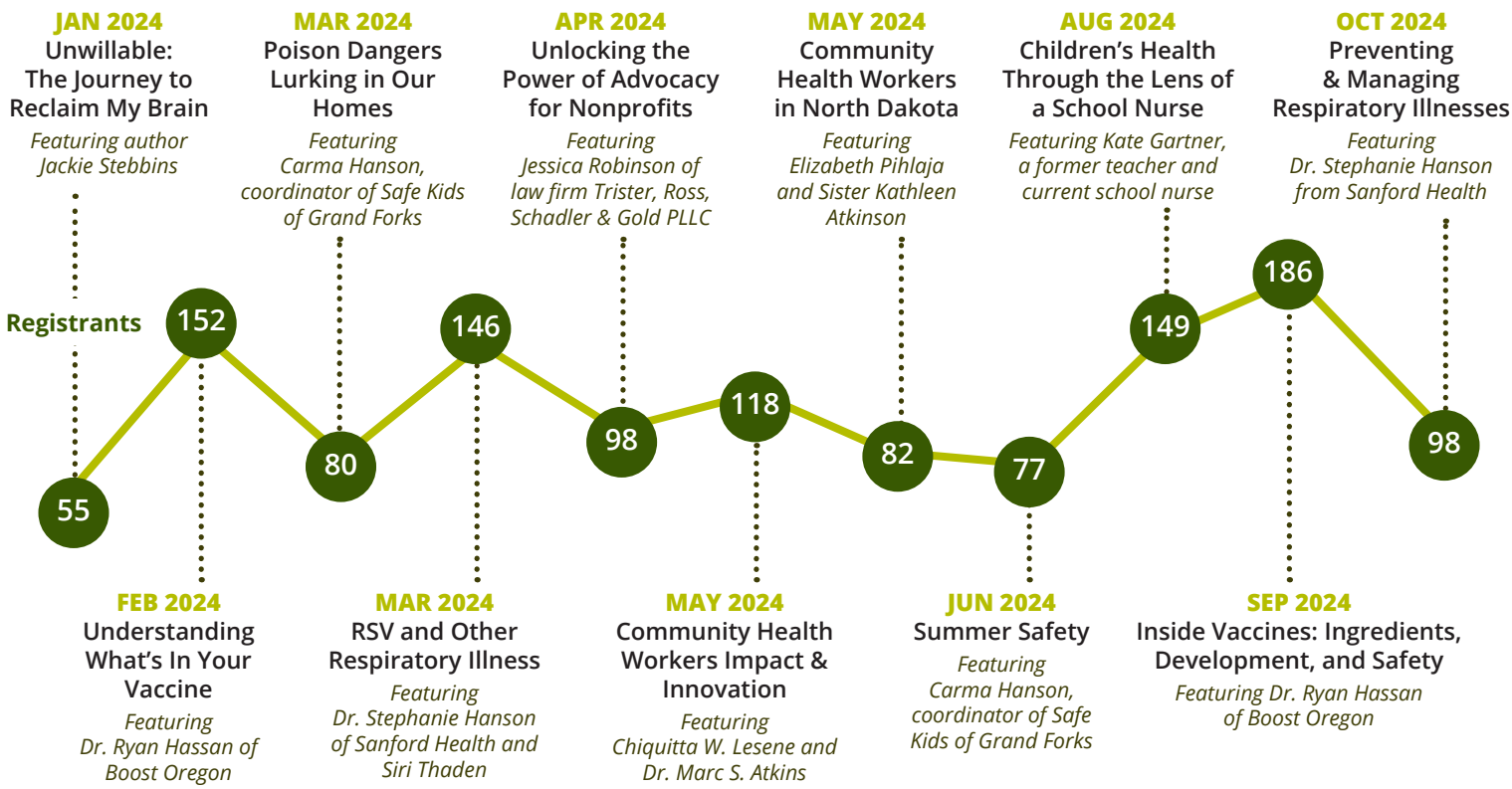
Our ongoing monthly webinar series includes experts in their field presenting on a particular health topic, plus an additional storyteller when possible to bring a human element to the subject matter. In 2024, this series covered an array of important topics.

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

11
webinars

1,241
participants
more than 2x the number
of participants in 2023

112+
average # of participants
more than 2x the number of
average participants in 2023



SUBSCRIBER/COALITION GROWTH

DEC 2023 **524**

NOV 2024 **940**



Average growth of
37
people after each webinar



VACCINE ADVOCACY LEARNING COMMUNITY

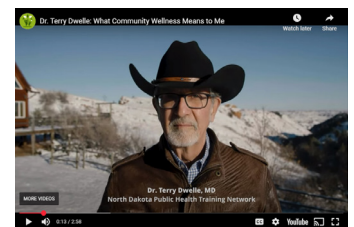
In September 2024, we launched a new online community for North Dakotans looking to learn more about wellness vaccines, including the history of immunization, safety monitoring, mRNA technology, identifying and navigating mis- and disinformation, and more. The community is free for all to join and features monthly hour-long virtual conversations on rotating subjects over the lunch hour. Each session features wellness vaccine education from a topic matter expert, opportunities for discussion, and training on grassroots advocacy techniques to help folks move from, “Someone should do something about this!” to “I can do something about this!”



STORYTELLING THROUGH VIDEO

This past year, we teamed up with leaders from across North Dakota to learn more about what community wellness means to them. These learnings were turned into a video series that we shared across our social media platforms and on our website, with the goal of showing North Dakotans that health has a variety of definitions depending on your personal and professional backgrounds. Videos featured ...

- **Cheryl Kary**, executive director of Sacred Pipe Resource Center in Mandan
- **Dr. Amy Kempfer**, a chiropractor, nonprofit board president and volunteer reserve deputy
- **Sister Kathleen Atkinson**, executive director and founder of Ministry on the Margins
- **Pastor Dawn Busch**, a pastor for Belfield, Daglum, and Medora Lutheran Parish
- **Dr. Terry Dwelle**, a pediatric infectious disease and public health specialist



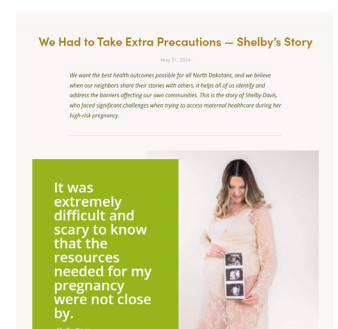
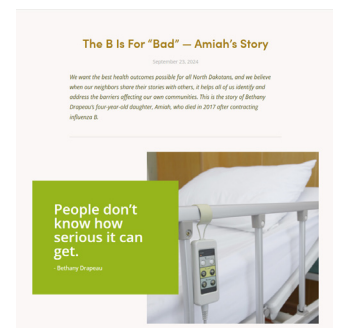
Watch these
videos and
more!



STORYTELLING THROUGH BLOGS

Also in 2024, we introduced a new blog series that highlights community stories featuring a variety of wellness journeys through illness and health. Our goal through sharing these on FHND's website is to raise awareness of resources, create connections, and uplift voices within the community. Stories include that of ...

- **Siri Thaden's son Ivar**, who was hospitalized three times as an infant after contracting RSV
- **Trishia Powell**, a licensed independent clinical social worker in Fargo who specializes in women's mental health
- **Shelby Davis**, who faced significant challenges when trying to access maternal health care during her high-risk pregnancy
- **Danielle Hall**, who shared her experience as a vaccine educator in the public health and social work space
- **Bethany Drapeau's daughter, Amiah**, who died in 2017 after contracting influenza B



Read these
stories and
more!

TIMELINE OF OUTREACH & EVENT DETAILS

In 2024, our staff attended events around the state and country to learn more about the communities we serve and advocate for better health outcomes for all North Dakotans.

FEB
2024

INDIGENOUS ASSOCIATION QUILLWORK CLASS

FHND sponsored this class, which provided community crafters with up-to-date RSV and flu immunization information. A registered nurse was also on hand to answer everyone’s vaccine-related questions.



APR
2024

BREAKING THE ICE SUMMIT

This event focused on cultural wellness and social health factors within the BIPOC and New American, Foreign Born, and Immigrant (NFI) communities in the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo area.

APR
2024

NCICP CONFERENCE

Our team traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for this 16th annual gathering, where we connected with a variety of health-centered organizations and resources.



JUN
2024

NORTH DAKOTA IMMUNIZATION CONFERENCE

We set up a table and engaged in conversation to make new connections for a healthier North Dakota.

SEP
2024

TRIBAL LEADERS SUMMIT AND TRADESHOW

This event united tribes from across the nation for two days of speakers and workshops to promote cultural exchange and foster collective progress.



SEP
2024

RESPIRATORY ILLNESS KICKOFF

We teamed up with local and state health care partners for a community kickoff event to encourage North Dakotans to prepare for the upcoming respiratory illness season by getting immunized against viruses like influenza, COVID-19, and RSV.

OCT
2024

IMMUNIZATION EDUCATION EVENT

FHND teamed up with Fargo Cass Public Health and ND Health and Human Services’ Community Engagement Section and Immunization Section at Rustad Recreation Center in West Fargo.



OCT
2024

BOO TO THE FLU

Our executive director dressed up in her Halloween best for an educational event with CHI St. Alexius Health.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES Wellness Fair

Our first-ever Children & Families Wellness Fair, held at Essentia Health Plaza at The Lights, brought together community and local resources for a fun-filled day centered around health. Attendees enjoyed activities, interactive booths, and more. This event was free and provided fun for all ages. Featured 2024 activities included family yoga with Mojo Fit Studios, a reading bus with West Fargo Public Library, coloring activities with Great Plains Food Bank, games with ND Health and Human Services, and more. We were grateful to have sponsors Sanford Health, Essentia Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation, and Corwin Honda support this inaugural event.



REPORTS & RESOURCES



QUARTERLY REPORTS

Beginning in Q1 of 2024, we started releasing quarterly data analyses centering on wellness vaccines, children's health factors, hunger and social vulnerability levels to help inform decision-making and priorities at the community level. The future of North Dakota depends on a healthy, thriving population for our workforce, economic growth, and an excellent quality of life.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS GUIDE

We released a guide lifting up what is currently working in community public health in North Dakota. The guide focused on local organizations that are grounded in the needs of the community – whether that is sharing easy-to-understand, culturally relevant health information, supporting new parents in navigating postpartum life, offering safe and accessible shelter, or connecting people to services and experts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOULA POLICY

Beginning in fall 2023, we convened a workgroup focused on exploring policy strategies, from noted best practices to innovative approaches, to improve equity amongst the rural pregnant and postpartum individuals in our state. The workgroup identified at least four possible next steps for incorporating doula services into maternal care, ultimately improving outcomes for both mothers and babies, which we released in July 2024.



POLICY & LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

North Dakota Innovation, Equity, and Exploration (IEE) workgroup & Doulas in North Dakota:

In 2024, we brought together a diverse group of people – from state agencies, to tribal communities, to moms who have been there – to figure out how to better support pregnant and new moms in rural North Dakota. We wanted to make sure that all moms, especially those with limited resources, have the best possible care during pregnancy and after their babies are born.

We talked about what's working well with North Dakota Medicaid and where things could be improved. We heard from experts, researchers and — most importantly — moms themselves about the challenges they face. Together, we explored ways to make sure all moms in our state have access to the care they need, no matter where they live.

Here are some of the ideas that came out of our discussions:

- **Pay doulas through Medicaid:** This could be especially helpful for moms after they give birth, which aligns with what many organizations are already working on.
- **Combine doula work with community health worker programs:** This could create a specialized role for doulas within existing community health programs.
- **Study the benefits of doula care:** We need more research to fully understand how doulas can improve outcomes for moms and babies.
- **Create a care coordination system:** This system would bring together different types of health care providers, including doulas, to ensure moms get the best possible care.

This collaboration and report was funded by a grant from Voices for Healthy Kids, an initiative of the American Heart Association (AHA.) The AHA has not reviewed the data or science in this report.



FHND BUDGET

(December 1, 2021 - June 30, 2026)

FYE 6/30/23

\$664,015

FYE 6/30/24

\$847,259

FYE 6/30/25

\$925,667

FYE 6/30/26

\$422,327

PARTNERSHIPS

Multi-Partner Health Collaborative

This past June, The Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota, American Heart Association, and North Dakota Health & Human Services teamed up to create a new health collaborative that builds bridges for a healthier North Dakota. The Multi-Partner Health Collaborative (MPHC) advocates for sustainable resources and increasing access to options that foster health and wellness throughout our state with the vision of North Dakota becoming the healthiest state in the nation.

The MPHC is made up of the executive leadership board, members of the steering committee and leaders of the four key goal groups. It partners with communities, tribal nations, business and other sectors to equitably enhance health and wellness.

The goal groups function as specialized work groups, focusing on critical areas outlined in the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). Through collaborative efforts and shared resources, they work to drive measurable progress toward collective health objectives.



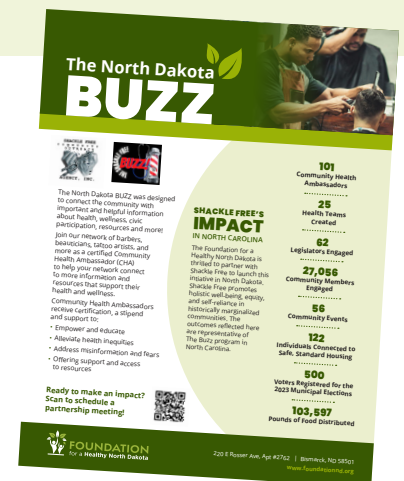
NORTH DAKOTA BUZZ: Community Health Workers in North Dakota With Shackle Free

Late in 2024, the Foundation solidified a partnership with Shackle Free Community Outreach to increase access for North Dakotans to health and wellness information and resources. Shackle Free Community Outreach launched and has successfully sustained a Community Health Worker program in North Carolina, connecting thousands of individuals with vital information and resources like free food options for their families. We're excited to watch this partnership bloom in 2025 and open more doors for neighbors across our state.



The MPHC executive team is comprised of:

- **Tony Burke** — State Government Relations Director, South Dakota & North Dakota American Heart Association
- **Krissie Guerard** — Director of Community Engagement, North Dakota Health and Human Services
- **Pam Guleson** — Multi-Partner Health Collaborative Coordinator, Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota
- **Hayden Kemp** — Community Engagement Coordinator for the Community Engagement Unit, North Dakota Health and Human Services
- **Grace N. Njau, Ph.D., MPH** — Director of Special Projects and Health Analytics, North Dakota Health and Human Services
- **Sandra Tibke** — Executive Director, Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota
- **Nizar Wehbi, M.D., MPH** — State Health Officer, North Dakota Department of Health



NEXT STEPS

You can help make North Dakota the healthiest state in the nation! Sign up for updates from the Foundation and get involved at **www.foundationnd.org**.

We offer:

- Webinars on topics that impact our communities
- A library of resources and reports to ensure the public can stay informed
- Stories from fellow North Dakotans about their health and wellness journeys
- Ways for folks across the state to stay informed and advocate for resources that help everyone



FOUNDATION
for a Healthy North Dakota

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